SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, through you, I would like to ask one clarification from the hon. Minister. Is it a fact that the BSNL is being discouraged from erecting new towers so that you can favour the private operators? Is that the reason why the Government has not started taking any steps? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: Sir, whatever has been mentioned by the hon. Member, is not ture. It is not a fact. The BSNL is still in the process. In fact, as I have mentioned several times in this House, all the private operators started their service way-back in 1994. The BSNL started its service only in 2002. In three years' time, the BSNL has been given a remarkable service. In this financial year, we are adding 14 million lines, and we are now in the process...*(Interruptions)*... The reason is that everyone wants a BSNL Phone because the tarrif plan is very transparent, very categorical and very cheap...*(Interruptions)*... That is the reason why there is a demand for the BSNL telephones...*(Interruptions)*...

कोल-विदेश द्वारा कोयला निकाला जाना

*425. **श्री रवि शंकर प्रसाद:††**
श्री राम जेठमलानी:

क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि सरकार द्वारा विदेशों में कोयला खानों की खरीद आदि के लिये कोल-विदेश नाम से एक संस्था का गठन किया गया था;

(ख) यदि हां, तो यह संस्था कब गठित की गयी थी, तथा इसमें कार्य करने के लिए श्रेणीवार कितने लोग नियुक्त किये गये; और

(ग) इस संस्था द्वारा अक्तूबर, 2005 तक कितनी कोयला खानों की विदेशों में खरीद की गई?

कोयला मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (डा. दसारी नारायण राव): (क) और (ख) जी, नहीं। तथापि, कोल इंडिया लिमिटेड (सी.आई.एल.) ने विदेशों में कोयला परिसम्पत्तियां प्राप्त करने के लिए "कोल विदेश" लिमिटेड नामक एक नयी सहायक कंपनी स्थापित करने का प्रस्ताव किया है।

(ग) विदेशों में कोई कोयला खान अभी तक नहीं खरीदी गई है।

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††सभा में यह प्रश्न श्री रवि शंकर प्रसाद द्वारा पूछा गया।

Coal extraction by "Coal-Videsh"

†*425. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:††
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an institute by the name of 'Coal-Videsh' was constituted by the Government for purchase of coal mines, etc. abroad;

(b) if so, the date of constitution of the said institute and the number of persons appointed therein category-wise; and

(c) the number of coal mines etc. purchased from abroad by the said institute upto October, 2005?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, Coal India Limited (CIL) has proposed setting up of a new subsidiary by the name "Coal Videsh" Limited for acquiring coal properties abroad.

(c) No coal mines have been purchased abroad so far.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Sir, the reply of the hon. Minister is rather curious. He states that the Coal India Limited has proposed setting up of a new subsidiary by the name "Coal Videsh". What is the response of the Government? If that had been clarified, we would have been in a better position. If any PSU seeks global ambition, that is quite welcome. We have the case of the ONGC. But to become global, your roots need to be strong. We have got 10 per cent of the world coal, but large areas remain untapped. I would like to submit one thing. Is Coal India Limited in a competitive, commercially viable position to undertake global initiative abroad? That is my first question.

DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO: Sir, the hon. Member is a former Minister for Coal. He is very much aware of the Coal India and the reserves of the Indian coal. Sir, you know that there are about 247 billion tonnes of reserves we have, which contains high ash content, from 15 per cent to 45 per cent, and at times, from 55 per cent to 60 per cent also. Out of our total reserves, 2.4 billion tonnes has got a low ash content. So, this is one aspect. Today, the power generation in the country requires more coal supply; 80 per cent of our coal production is being supplied for power generation. Another problem is concerning coking coal. We have coking coal, but at the Jharia...*(Interruptions)*...

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad

श्री सभापति: अहलुवालिया जी, जस धीरे बोलिए। ....(व्यवधान)...

DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO: ....160 million tonnes of coal is locked up. We are importing nearly 14-15 million tonnes of coking coal. The reasons given for this proposal include strengthening the energy security of the country by ensuring, on a long-term basis, the supply of much needed coking coal and low ash non-coking coal.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Hon. Minister, the reply still has not come. Most of the thermal power plants around seaports are having coal from abroad. In order that the Coal India becomes competitive, you need to have low ash content, proper cleaning of the coal and proper tapping of all the resources. There also, you need to have a public-private participation.

The second question is this. We had a Bill whereby we wish to allow private sectors to extract coal on a commercial basis. Till date, we have only captive factor for that. Does the Government propose to bring into implementation that particular legislation to have a proper competitve edge in India for coal exploitation?

DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO: Sir, I am quite sure that our Government is more concerned about improving the coal production. Here, I would like to mention, through you, Sir, to the House that in 2004-05, we have improved the production by seventeen million tonnes; that is more that the Planning Commission's target. This year, we have planned to increase it by 30 million tonnes. We are going to give more coal. We have now worked out an emergency production plan—for approval by the Cabinet—that we are going to have extra production of 71 million tonnes within these two years. Sir, last year, during the NDA regime—I do not want to make a political statement—out of 28 mega projects, only one project was sanctioned. Since the UPA Government came to power, we have sanctioned five mega projects and all other projects are in the pipeline. We are going to complete it within a six-months duration. Sir, from 1993-2004, 49 captive blocks were allocated for the private sector whereas we have already allocated 40 blocks. We have announced 20 new blocks and eight lignite blocks. So, we are more concerned about encouraging... *(Interruptions)*...

श्री सभापति: ठीक है।

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Mr. Minister, I talked about...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Subbarami Reddy. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*... I won't allow you ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Sir, he did not reply to my question. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no; not at all. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: *

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Subbarami Reddy. ...*(Interruptions)*... Dr. Subbarami Reddy. ...*(Interruptions)*... Nothing will go on record.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: *

श्री सभापति: बोलिए, सुब्बारामी रेड्डी जी। ...(व्यवधान)...

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, it is a known fact that today, there is a heavy shortage of coal in our country and a number of power projects are in great need of coal. To meet this requirement, there are two options, either to explore more coal production within the country or to import coal from abroad. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is planning to explore coal production within the country or whether he is also going to have more mines in other countries and explore coal there through the Government.

DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO: Sir, the power generation is going up and the PLF is increasing day by day. Keeping in view the rapid increase in power generation, the coal production cannot be increased in a day or two because it will take for a project, if approved, nearly four to five or six years to come into operation. So, the Government has now simplified the procedure and all the files will be cleared within 24 weeks. We are completing the project on a war footing.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, I am supplementing the first part of the question put by Mr. Ravi Shanker Prasad, not the second one. Part (a) of my question is, instead of going in for a Coal Videsh Limited, whether Coal India Limited with its own reserves try to merge its own subsidiaries like the Eastern Coal Fields and Bharat Coking Coal Limited, which are sick, and strengthen it so that its coal production improves. Part (b) of my question is whether Government is having two minds. On the one hand, there is a question on the ONGC going abroad and, on the other side, the Government, not the Coal Ministry, is thinking of having an investment abroad. I would like to know whether there is any synergy, so far as the Government is concerned, on the energy sector.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is enough, Mr. Dipankar Mukherjee.

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* Not recorded.

DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO: Sir, this is a proposal moved by the Coal India Limited and the proposal has reached the Government, and the Government has to consider the proposal. When it comes to the Govenrment, we will elaborately discuss about it and then I will get back to the Member.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, it is about the merger of BCCL and ECL with Coal India Limited. Proposals are given by a number of agencies to the Government. I would like to know whether that will be initiated first before going abroad. That is the first part of my question.

DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO: Sir, at present, we don't have any such proposal. The hon. Member is very much concerned about it. We will look into it.

श्री अबू आसिम आजमी: चेयरमैन साहब, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूं कि किस देश से कितना कोयला इम्पोर्ट किया जा रहा है, क्या हर साल इसकी मात्रा बढ़ती चली जा रही है और इस पर कुल कितना खर्चा आ रहा है?

†[شری ابوعاصم اعظمی: چیئرمین صاحب، میں آپ کے ماوسیلہ سے منتری جی سے پوچھنا چاہتا ہوں کہ کس دیش میں کتنا کوئلہ امپورٹ کیا جارہا ہے؟ کیا ہر سال اس کی ماترا بڑھتی جارہی ہے اور اس پر کتنا خرچ آرہا ہے؟]

DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO: Sir, most probably, we are depending on imported coking coal. Coking coal production is very less. We get 23.8 million tonnes of coking coal from the public sector and 6.3 million tonnes from the private sector. The total comes to 30 million tonnes. Our requirement is 45 million tonnes. So, there is no other go except to import.

Growth of KVI sector

*426. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN:††
DR. K. MALAISAMY:

Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether enough priority and importance are given to the growth and development of Khadi and Village Industries sector in the wake of its vital role in rural economy and employment;

† [ ] Transliteration in Urdu Script.

†† The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri S.P.M. Syed Khan.